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REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONER

ON A

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL.

CONCORD :
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THE STATE OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE.

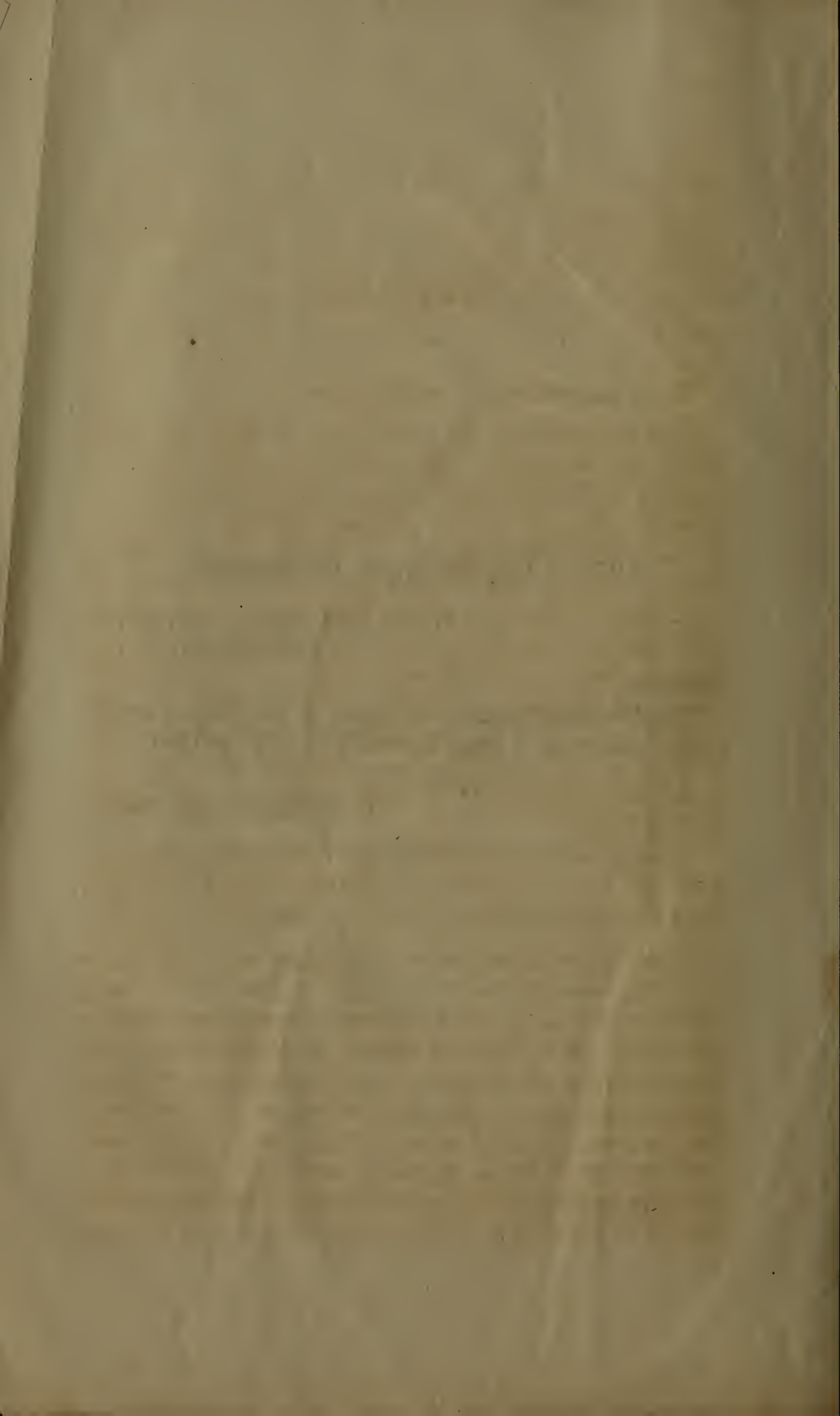
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
June 11, 1867. }

ORDERED :

That the usual number of copies of the Report of the
Commissioner on a State Normal School be printed.

Attest :

C. B. SHACKFORD, *Clerk.*



REPORT.

To the Legislature of New-Hampshire :

By a resolution of the Legislature of 1866, His Excellency, the Governor, was authorized and required to appoint a Commissioner whose duty it should be to advertise for and receive proposals for the donation of grounds and buildings for the use of a State Normal School. Also to ascertain the expense of the maintenance of normal schools in not less than three of the nearest neighboring States sustaining such schools; to inquire into the best method of organizing and conducting the same, and generally ascertain such facts relative to normal schools as may aid the Legislature in their action relative thereto, and to report the same, together with such proposals and donations as he might receive, to the Legislature of 1867.

Having been appointed to said office, and having fulfilled the duties required by the above named resolution, the undersigned respectfully submits the following report:

It cost the early advocates of this system of instruction an arduous and protracted struggle to gain for it a recognition as among the most important means for promoting education. Hon. Horace Mann, in Massachusetts, and Hon. Thomas H. Burrowes, of Pennsylvania, were the principal pioneers in this great enterprise of establishing institutions, the chief aim of which should be to teach teachers how to teach, to make teaching a profession, to give the most complete instruction in the various branches taught in common schools, to insist on the most thorough

drill in this department, and at the same time to make the method of instruction and of government a *specialty* to which the most careful consideration should be given.

It is not needful here to give in detail the history or the work of normal schools, nor yet to bring forth argument to convince your honorable body of their utility and benefits. If the people of New-Hampshire pay willingly and freely hundreds of thousands yearly for the education of their children, it would be absurd to suppose they would not pay a few thousand dollars quite as freely for the special instruction of the teachers of their children in the true art of teaching. If the smaller sum is needed to make the larger sum effectual in accomplishing its work, it surely is not wisdom to withhold it.

The friends of education had been seeking earnestly and long to find out some sure method of making their appropriations of more permanent advantage in its interests. College drill and academic training, secretaries, superintendents and commissioners, had been employed and earnestly put forth their efforts. But the college graduate, or even the successful student, does not stop long in the common school, and the superintendent or commissioner comes in contact with the school or with the teacher but a brief space of time—too brief by far to make his services of much avail. Some other agency was needed, and must be secured, before the generous appropriations of the people could accomplish their real purpose.

The friends of the normal school think they have hit upon the right expedient for solving the perplexing problem. To instruct the coming teacher thoroughly in the special branches he intends to teach; also as to the best methods of awakening thought and forming memory and reason into *faculty*, and at the same time to bind him to the service for a term of years,—this seems to be the

wisest method yet adopted for the improvement of our schools. This work the normal school attempts to do. It usually takes its members from the most thoughtful, energetic, self-reliant young persons, — those who have not sufficient means to think of living without labor, nor yet so hardly pressed as to have their noblest aspirations crushed out by poverty:—those who feel that they are in this world for work and are willing to perform their share. When fitly educated they become the most successful teachers; hence Massachusetts, with her four normal schools, beside the one in Boston, can not furnish one in twenty of the teachers which are called for at their doors as fast as classes graduate. New-York, with two, has taken measures for establishing four more, while nearly all the Western States are showing, by their deeds, that they believe they have found in the normal school the fountain from which shall flow the influences that are to keep alive the interests of the common school in time to come.

In most States the accommodations of these schools are yet too limited for the reception of all applicants; hence the scholarships are assigned by counties in proportion to their population; the candidates are required to pass an examination, and those found qualified are admitted. They are organized in classes as in our best high schools; the uniformity in scholarship, up to a given standard, admitting of large classes, it requires less teachers to accomplish a given amount of work than in almost any other school. I am thoroughly convinced that there is no other way in which a few thousand dollars can be employed with equal benefit to the cause of education as in establishing and sustaining a good normal school.

The expense of such a school will not be greater to the State than that of our Reform School. We have come to think the utility of that institution is sufficient compen-

sation for its cost. But how much greater would be the work and benefit of a normal school! In the Reform School we labor to instruct, and, if possible, to reform, one hundred children, more or less; and these, saved to the cause of virtue and of man, are an advantage to the State it would be difficult to estimate. In the normal school we shall be teaching one hundred *teachers*, who will go forth in turn and teach tens of thousands of our children, sending their influence throughout the State, perhaps throughout the world, and down the stream of time, who of us can tell to periods how remote?

There is no other agency now known by which the interest of the common school can be promoted and the qualifications of teachers raised to a higher standard so readily and with so small expense as by the normal school. Hence this institution is being rapidly adopted by all the States in which we find a deep interest in education or a true appreciation of what is needed to secure our future welfare. In the late Confederate States, in the Border States (excepting Maryland), in Utah, and in Indiana, we find no normal school. But in Iowa and Minnesota, in California and Kansas, as well as in all the most enlightened States (except Rhode-Island and New-Hampshire), it is one of the pet institutions.

We ought to judge what is our duty from the company in which we find ourselves, if we can not find more satisfactory reason.

With regard to the expense of supporting a Normal School, it will be very much as the people please to have it. In the school of which I now have charge, the salaries of teachers, for the spring term of 1866, amounted to \$2,994; for the corresponding term the present year, the salaries amount to \$2,075; a reduction of expenses in the item of salaries alone, of nearly a thousand dollars for a single term; yet there are a third more scholars now in the school than there were then. For the next term

the salaries will be reduced \$500 below what I am paying now, with as good teachers as at present. This is the difference between managing another man's business in a reckless way, and managing one's own business as it should be done. The State can find men ready to receive all the funds it likes to lavish; or it can find men of judgment, prudence, and integrity, who will make a dollar pay for its real value, as well in public as in private matters.

The expense of the four normal schools in Massachusetts during the last few years, has varied but very little from twenty-four thousand dollars (\$24,000), or six thousand (\$6,000) each, per year. It need not—would not cost New-Hampshire an equal sum to support a Normal School, and to support it well. Massachusetts pays more freely of her means, for many purposes, than we can well afford to do, expending much upon officials, which New-Hampshire, being long accustomed to habits of economy, would know well how to avoid. The yearly expense of the school in Framingham is less than five thousand dollars. That in Salem costs nearly seven thousand dollars yearly. The cost of the normal school in Connecticut varies very little from that of those in Massachusetts, and Maine pays less than either, yearly, to sustain this branch of education—hers costing between five thousand and six thousand dollars per annum. I think that a good normal school can be supported in New-Hampshire for five thousand dollars per annum; perhaps, with as careful management as one exercises in his own affairs, it could be done for less than this.

The Middle and Western States are expending very generous sums in this direction, but we have not their means, and must move with a more cautious step. The normal school buildings at Trenton, New-Jersey, cost \$72,500; that at Ypsilanti, Michigan, over a hundred

thousand; and that at Winona, Minnesota, probably as much, or more than both of these. These buildings have increased much in value since they were constructed, and hence have proved a profitable investment. New-York is to erect, the present year, four new normal school buildings, at a cost of not less than two hundred thousand dollars each. And the cost of conducting the schools in these States is much heavier than it has been in the New-England States.

New-Hampshire will need to be at no expense for a school building—she having the use of two now tendered her. Mont-Vernon makes a proposition to give the State the use of Appleton Academy, with the library, apparatus, and furniture, so long as it shall be used for the purpose of a normal school.

To ORREN PERKINS, Esq., Commissioner for the State of New-Hampshire to receive proposals in relation to the establishment of a Normal School in said State, &c.

Respectfully represent the undersigned, that at a meeting of the members of the Appleton Academy corporation, held at Mont-Vernon the 23d day of March, 1867, they were instructed to communicate to you the following proposition: namely,

That, provided said school should be established in this place, the corporation would transfer to the State their academy building, with the land thereunto belonging, together with the library, philosophical and chemical apparatus, a valuable piano, and all the lamps and fixtures connected therewith, so long as said school shall be continued here. (Estimated value, see schedule.)

And the trustees would further represent that the town has made application to the legislature for the passage of an act to enable them to raise a sum, not exceeding five thousand dollars, for the purpose aforesaid.

SCHEDULE.

Academy Building, with land,	\$10,000
Library,	800
Apparatus,	100
Piano,	400
Chandelier and other fixtures,	50
Furnace, stove funnel, &c.,	100
Settees,	100
	<hr/>
	\$11,550

The Academy building, 60 feet by 40.

And believing, as we do, that this Institution should be located in some quiet village, away from the contaminating influence of vice and gross immorality which exist in cities, represent that (in their opinion) Mont-Vernon is one of the most desirable locations that can be found. It may be objected that it is not connected with railway. But Milford depot is only four miles distant, and, provided the said school should be established here, we guarantee that a daily conveyance of passengers to and from said depot shall be furnished.

JOHN BRUCE, } *Committee in behalf*
 GEORGE E. DEAN, } *of Corporation and*
 W. H. CONANT, } *Trustees.*

Mont-Vernon, March 29, 1867.

This academy is in good condition, having been built but a few years since. It is situated in a pleasant village, four miles from the Milford station, on the Nashua and Wilton railroad. It is situated on elevated land, with a fine prospect of distant hills and intervening valleys. The location is a healthful one, and I am informed that the moral atmosphere is very pure. It is a pleasant place to study in summer, especially if the student wishes to be quiet with his books a large part of the time. It is less convenient of access than would be a situation on the rail-

road; but if students would find less there to amuse or to instruct outside the school-room, they might find less also to divert attention from their studies. There are several active friends of education in Mont-Vernon, who will do all they can to help on the enterprise, if successful, in securing this location for the school.

The citizens of Manchester have also made a generous proposition for the location of the school in their prosperous and growing city. This proposition is as follows:

CITY OF MANCHESTER, N. H., }
Office of City Clerk, March 21, 1867. }

At a meeting of the legal voters in School District No. 2 in the city of Manchester, duly notified, and held on the 16th of March instant, the following resolutions were passed without a dissenting vote:

Resolved, That school district No. 2 hereby offers to the State of New-Hampshire, for the period of five years, the free use of the lower story of the new high school house, or so much of said house, not exceeding one half the room, as the school committee may determine, to be used for a normal school, on condition that the State accept the offer within six months from date, and as soon as may be thereafter, establish and locate in the house a State Normal School.

Resolved, That the board of school committee are hereby authorized to convey to the State the privilege granted by the foregoing vote, and have the care and control of the house so long as it shall be used by the State.

A true record—

Attest: JOSEPH E. BENNETT,
Clerk of School District No. 2.

A true copy of record—

Attest: JOSEPH E. BENNETT,
Clerk of School District No. 2.

I need not speak of the advantages of this location, either as a railroad center, the center of population in the

State, nor of the large number of true friends which a school would find there, to cherish it and help secure for it the success all would desire. The interest the citizens of Manchester have manifested in the Reform School is a sufficient guarantee that they would willingly meet all their obligations to insure the prosperity of an institution which would be of so much advantage to their city and the State.

The rooms they offer for the uses of a normal school are ample and sufficient, elegant and convenient. I would recommend that a committee be at once appointed to visit this location, and the other also, if it shall be deemed essential, to see what accommodations are awaiting the acceptance of the State, that she may put in operation, without delay, one of the most necessary and useful institutions. There are ample accommodations in the rooms at Manchester for a hundred students. Normal schools are usually divided into four classes—a new class entering once in six months, and studying two years. The classes being few, less rooms are required for recitations, and less teachers to conduct the exercises.

Should either of these propositions be accepted, very little legislation would be required to establish such a school; and even should it not prove successful, there would be no loss suffered by the State beyond the cost of its support for the time of its continuance. It would be necessary to appoint a Board of Trustees, to secure a Principal and determine the course of study to be pursued: also to lend the institution proper aid, and place about it proper safeguards. A sufficient number of this Board, to look after its interests with proper care, should reside where the school is located; a sufficient number, to guard well the interests of the State, should be residents of other places, not however situated too remotely to offer counsel and assistance in arranging and carrying out the plan.

The normal school law of Vermont is very brief. It establishes one normal school in the academy at Randolph, and provides that one such school may be established in each of the other congressional districts, when the citizens of some place in those districts shall comply with the conditions of the act establishing the first. Theirs is established for the term of five years.

I judge that this would be the most expedient method for New-Hampshire to adopt—giving sufficient time to try the experiment, but not confining it for all time to one method or one place.

The Vermont law provides for two courses of study; the first to include all the branches required by law to be taught in the common schools of Vermont; the other course shall include all contained in the first course and higher branches; and a year only is required for graduation.

There would be some great advantages, however, in making it a permanent thing from the first; its friends might then collect for it a library and apparatus, and, perhaps, secure for it bequests from such benevolent individuals as have means to give, to promote the interests of education.

It would be well, I think, to provide, in the law establishing such a school, for the reception of bequests, and for their investment and security; also to apply the laws respecting the instruction, discipline, &c., of our best high schools to this.

The branches taught in a normal school should be at least Orthography, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, English Grammar and Literature, Book-keeping, History, Philosophy, Elocution, Higher Mathematics, and the Theory and Practice of Teaching.

The course of study ought to be two years, but with

the privilege of entering six months or a year in advance, when well prepared in several of the branches taught.

I forward to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, for the use of the Committee on Education, or of the Select Committee, if such he shall appoint on this subject, a copy of the normal school law of Pennsylvania, and of that also of Vermont, together with the catalogues and circulars of several normal schools, which may aid them, possibly, in their deliberations.

I might give you a detailed account of the methods and course of instruction in the schools I visited at Westfield, Massachusetts, Albany, New-York, and other places; but if a school shall be established with the right man for a principal, if not already familiar with the peculiarities of this class of schools, he would find facilities in any well-conducted school for readily obtaining the information he would need.

I can not close this hurried and imperfect report without grateful acknowledgments to Messrs. Acry, of Albany, New-York, and Dickinson and Greenough, of Westfield, Massachusetts, for their kind personal attentions, and to the principals of the schools in Maine, Connecticut, New-Jersey, Michigan, Illinois, and Salem and Framingham, Massachusetts, for the readiness with which they placed such information as I sought, at my disposal.

ORREN PERKINS,

Commissioner on the subject of a State Normal School.

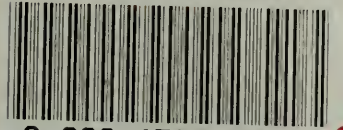
Winchester, N. H., June 8, 1867.

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